

The following is claimed:

1. A multiprocessor system, comprising:

a plurality of processor modules, including a software management processor;
a non-volatile storage memory configuration (NVS);
a plurality of software components stored in the NVS, wherein the software components
are configured for use with the processor modules; and
a software generic control information file (SGC) stored in the NVS, wherein the SGC
includes information relating to the compatibility of the software components with the processor
modules; and

wherein the software management processor uses the SGC to determine which of the
software components to distribute to one of the processor modules that requests software stored
on the NVS.

2. The system of claim 1 wherein the NVS comprises disk space.

3. The system of claim 1 wherein the NVS comprises memory devices.

4. The system of claim 1 wherein the NVS comprises CDs.

5. The system of claim 1 wherein the SGC contains a product section and a component section.

**6. In a multiprocessor system having a plurality of processor modules, a non-volatile storage
memory configuration (NVS), a plurality of software components stored in the NVS, wherein
the software components are configured for use with the processor modules, and a software
generic control information file (SGC) stored in the NVS, wherein the SGC includes
information relating to the compatibility of the software components with the processor
modules, a method of operation comprising the steps of:**

checking the SGC to determine if the software components are compatible with the processor modules;

requesting software by a first of the processor modules;

searching through the SGC to identify which software components are compatible with the first processor module;

supplying a software component file to the first processor module.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the searching step further comprises the step of searching by maximum and minimum hardware type.

8. In a multiprocessor system having a plurality of processor modules, a non-volatile storage memory configuration (NVS) having a primary bank and an alternate bank, a plurality of software components stored in the NVS, wherein the software components are configured for use with the processor modules, and a software generic control information file (SGC) stored in the NVS, wherein the SGC includes information relating to the compatibility of the software components with the processor modules, a method of activating a software load comprising the steps of:

downloading the software load to the alternate bank;

initiating a system boot up using software component stored in the alternate bank;

checking the SGC to determine which software components are compatible with which processor modules;

providing to the processor modules the software components that they are compatible with;

verifying that the system is operating properly

re-designating the former alternate bank as the new primary bank and the former primary bank as the new alternate bank

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the NVS comprises two redundant storage devices.
10. The method of claim 9 wherein the two redundant storage devices are non-volatile memory cards containing non-volatile memory devices.
11. The method of claim 8 wherein the multiprocessor system further comprises a software management processor wherein the software management processor is the only one of the processors that has direct communication with the NVS.
12. The method of claim 8 wherein the NVS comprises two redundant storage devices.
13. The method of claim 12 wherein each redundant storage device has a file system comprising:
 - a current context area containing a copy of system software that is accessible for uploading to the software management processor; and
 - an alternate context area that is accessible to the system processor for downloading a different version of system software.
14. A multiprocessor system, comprising:
 - a plurality of processor modules;
 - a non-volatile storage memory configuration (NVS);
 - a plurality of software components stored in the NVS, wherein the software components are configured for use with the processor modules; and
 - a software generic control information file (SGC) stored in the NVS, wherein the SGC includes information relating to the compatibility of the software components with the processor modules; and

wherein a first of the processor modules requests software that is stored on the NVS and wherein the SGC is used to determine which of the software components is to be provided to the first processor in response to the request for software.

15. The system of claim 14 wherein the NVS comprises two redundant storage devices.

16. The system of claim 15 wherein each redundant storage device has a file system comprising:

 a current context area containing a copy of system software that is accessible for uploading to the software management processor; and

 an alternate context area that is accessible to the system processor for downloading a different version of system software.

17. The multiprocessor system of claim 16 wherein the alternate context area and current context area in each redundant storage device may be switched, whereby system software in the alternate context area becomes accessible to the software management processor for uploading.